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ABSTRACT

The satisfaction of University of Maryland College Park students was assessed as part of the Maryland Longitudinal Study. The College Student Satisfaction Questionnaire was used as a basis for determining satisfaction in the following areas: compensation, social life, working conditions, recognition, and quality of education. The results indicate that students are most satisfied with campus social life and rate lowest their satisfaction with faculty and staff support and encouragement. There were no significant differences between the black group of college freshmen and the representative sample of college freshmen on any satisfaction scales. Students in the representative sample who reported high involvement with fellow students and with student organizations were more highly satisfied with various aspects of the college experience. For black students, high involvement with faculty and staff was connected with greater satisfaction with important dimensions of college life. Freshmen in the representative sample who lived in residence halls were more satisfied with campus social life than those living with parents. As juniors, living off campus was associated with greater social life satisfaction. (SW)

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RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

MLS

Research Report #2

Maryland Longitudinal Study

Understanding and Increasing Students' Satisfaction With College

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Maryland Longitudinal Study Steering Committee
Division of Student Affairs
The University of Maryland College Park
Fall 1986

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MLS RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Maryland Longitudinal Study

RESEARCH REPORT #2

UNDERSTANDING AND INCREASING STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH COLLEGE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The focus of this report is on the satisfaction of students enrolled at The University of Maryland College Park who were studied as part of the Maryland Longitudinal Study (MLS). The College Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSSQ) was used as a basis for determining satisfaction in the following areas: **Compensation, Social Life, Working Conditions, Recognition, and Quality of Education.**

Five major questions were addressed:

I. What aspects of campus are students included within the Representative Sample most and least satisfied with and how do their satisfaction scores compare to students nationwide?

Our results indicate these students are most satisfied with campus "Social Life" and rate lowest their satisfaction with faculty and staff support and encouragement ("Recognition"). These students indicate higher satisfaction with college than the available national norm group.

II. Are Black Group subjects more or less satisfied than the Representative Sample?

There were no significant differences between the Black Group and the Representative Sample on any of the individual CSSQ scales or the Total Satisfaction index.

III. How do men and women differ in satisfaction for both the Black Group and Representative Sample?

No significant differences were found between men and women in the Representative Sample. In the Black Group, men were significantly more satisfied than women on practically all aspects measured by the CSSQ.

IV. How is satisfaction related to student involvement in campus life?

Students in the Representative Sample who reported high involvement with fellow students and with student organizations were more highly satisfied with various aspects of the college experience. The pattern of involvement and satisfaction for the Black Group was different: high involvement with faculty and staff was connected with greater satisfaction with important dimensions of college life.

V. How is satisfaction related to place of residence (i.e. on versus off campus)?

Freshmen in the Representative Sample who lived in residence halls were more satisfied with campus "Social Life" than those living with parents. As juniors, living off campus was associated with greater social life satisfaction. For the Black Group, males and females patterns of satisfaction and residence were distinct. Black men were significantly more satisfied with college than black women whether they lived on or off campus in both the freshmen and junior years. Black women's satisfaction varied by year, location and CSSQ scale.

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Maryland Longitudinal Study Steering Committee
Division of Student Affairs
The University of Maryland College Park
Fall 1986

UNDERSTANDING AND INCREASING STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH COLLEGE

Nationwide, about one half of the freshman class of 1986 will not complete their college education. While reasons including poor academic preparation, lack of clear goals, and student-institution mismatch play a part in this scenario, student satisfaction with the college experience also influences the likelihood of students' achievement of the baccalaureate degree. Common sense suggests that if students are not **satisfied** with their educational experience, they may not remain in school or may achieve less academically.

Furthermore, sources of **dissatisfaction** may be more apparent to college administrators if, for example, "exit interviews" or "transfer transitional meetings" are regular institutional procedures. Through these, insights may be gained to why some students choose to leave college.

However, it is usually more difficult to determine **the sources of satisfaction** and **dissatisfaction** for students who *remain* enrolled in school. Unlike the others who "vote with their feet", students who persist may not have the opportunity to clearly identify their likes and dislikes. The Maryland Longitudinal Study (hereafter, MLS) has collected data which may be useful in further understanding the satisfaction patterns of this important group of students.

The focus of the present report is on the satisfaction of students enrolled at The University of Maryland, College Park who were studied as part of the MLS. Section 1 describes the "College Student Satisfaction Questionnaire" (CSSQ), the instrument used to assess student satisfaction with various aspects of college. Section 2 briefly describes the student population surveyed. Section 3 presents results highlighting differences in satisfaction based on the race, sex, and residence (on and off campus) of the participants. Section 4 summarizes the study's major findings. Section 5 presents implications and suggestions for increasing student satisfaction at College Park.

I: THE COLLEGE STUDENT SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

The College Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSSQ) was used to assess students' attitudes regarding satisfaction with their college experience. Developed by Starr, Betz, and Menne (1971, 1983), the CSSQ is based on a vocational theory of job satisfaction. Hence, student satisfaction is defined along similar dimensions used to describe job satisfaction. The five dimensions include **Compensation, Social Life, Working Conditions, Recognition,** and **Quality of Education.** Five scales, composed of 14 items each appropriate to the college context, are used to assess these dimensions. Students rate their satisfaction with each item using a five point Likert scale, choices ranging from a low of "1" (very dissatisfied) to a high of "5" (very satisfied). Therefore, each scale score ranges from 14 to 70 based on the student's responses. A **Total Satisfaction** index is derived by summing the responses to all of the items from all of the 5 scales and ranges from 70 to 350. The five CSSQ scales are described below.

Scale 1: Compensation: The items composing this scale concern academic rigor or the amount of effort a student must put forward relative to rewards received (e.g. grades).

EXAMPLE ITEM: The chance you have of doing well if you work hard.

Scale 2: Social Life: The items composing this scale concern campus social life including satisfaction with opportunities to make friends, date, and engage in informal social activities.

EXAMPLE ITEM: The chance to get acquainted with other students outside of class.

Scale 3: Working Conditions: The items composing this scale relate to the campus physical environment such as the cleanliness and comfort of students' living conditions, adequacy of study areas and availability of places to lounge or study between classes.

EXAMPLE ITEM: The availability of good places to study.

Scale 4: Recognition: The items composing this scale concern students' satisfaction with support and encouragement provided by faculty and staff. Satisfaction with advising, personal attention and interaction as well as opportunity to talk with teachers outside of class are included as aspects of recognition.

EXAMPLE ITEM: The interest that advisors take in the progress of their students.

Scale 5: Quality of Education: The items composing this scale relate to the various academic conditions affecting students' intellectual and vocational development including opportunities for practicing thinking and reasoning, or for taking courses related to vocational interests or personal growth.

EXAMPLE ITEM: The chance to participate in class discussions about course material.

The CSSQ Manual (1983) reports a series of norms derived from an administration of the CSSQ in the spring of 1970 to approximately 3,000 undergraduates in public and private colleges. These figures represent the most recent national norm group available for the CSSQ and will be discussed in a later section of this report.

II: PARTICIPANTS: WHO PROVIDED THE DATA?

The CSSQ was used to collect data in the third year of MLS (1982-83) from students enrolled at UMCP in both the Representative Sample and the Black Group. The Representative Sample is based on a random sample of freshmen selected from the entering class of fall, 1980. Thus, this sample is a cross section of the larger freshman class and as such contains a representative group of minorities—including approximately 10% black students. Consequently, it is important to keep in mind that the Representative Sample is not a "white" sample, but instead reflects the ethnic diversity at UMCP.

Because of the Division of Student Affairs' strong interest in the collegiate experience of black students on campus and the relatively small number of blacks in the freshman class of 1980-81, all black freshmen not included in the Representative Sample were also invited to participate in MLS. Those blacks who agreed to participate became members of the "Black Group."

For purposes of analysis, the Black Group (consisting of all the black freshmen not already selected as part of the Representative Sample as well as the blacks in the Representative Sample), constitute the black individuals studied in this report. Using data from the blacks in the Representative Sample and adding them into the Black Group was done for two reasons. First, as large a group as possible was desirable because of the relatively small numbers of blacks in the original freshman class, and attrition over the years of the longitudinal study reduces the number of study participants. Second, the intention in the selection of the

Black Group was the testing of the total available (and willing) population, rather than of a specified "sample" as was the case with the Representative Sample. **Consequently, the blacks in the Representative Sample do "double duty" in these analyses by being members of the "Black Group" and members of the Representative Sample.**

The participants from the Representative Sample and Black Group tested with the CSSQ had been enrolled at UMCP since their freshman year (1980-81) and hence are termed "persisters" in this study. Data from the Representative Sample and Black Group are reported separately throughout this report. Analyses were made on 135 students in the Representative Sample and 68 from the Black Group.

In addition to the CSSQ, information for this report was gathered in a face-to-face interview and a written survey. Using a portion of these data, the present report will include how students' satisfaction with college (as measured by the CSSQ) is related to their degree of involvement in college life.

III: RESULTS

Five major questions concerning college students' satisfaction will be addressed here:

1. **What aspects of campus are students included within the Representative Sample most and least satisfied with and how do these satisfaction scores compare to students' nationwide?** To examine this question, the average satisfaction score for each of the five CSSQ scales and **Total Satisfaction** index will be reported, and these average satisfaction scores will be compared to the national norms reported by Starr, Betz, and Menne (1983).

2. **Are Black Group subjects more or less satisfied than the Representative Sample?** The Black Group's and the Representative Sample's CSSQ scores will be examined to answer this question.

3. **How do men and women differ in satisfaction for both the Black Group and Representative Sample?** The average satisfaction score for each of the CSSQ scales will be identified for both men and women in the Representative Sample and Black Group and any significant differences noted.

4. **How is satisfaction related to student involvement in campus life?** To answer this question, students will be divided first into "highly involved" and "less involved" groups by their responses to Annual Survey items assessing involvement in various aspects of campus life. Then levels of satisfaction with college as measured by the CSSQ for both the "highly involved" and "less involved" groups will be compared.

5. **How is satisfaction related to place of residence (e.g., living on or off campus)?**[2] The answer to this question will be based upon a comparison of student residence status (on versus off campus) and their level of satisfaction as measured by the CSSQ.

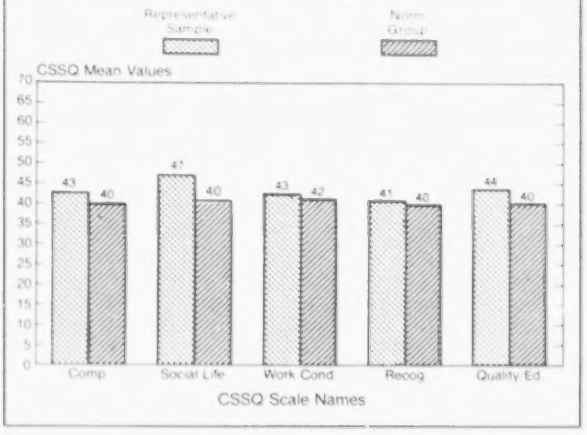
Question 1 — What aspects of campus are students included within the Representative Sample most and least satisfied with and how do these satisfaction scores compare to students' nationwide?

Persisters in the Representative Sample appeared most satisfied with campus social life. They average 47.2 (out of a possible high score of 70) on the CSSQ **Social Life** scale; this figure compares to 42.9 for the normative group reported in the CSSQ manual. Following satisfaction with social life, persisters in the Representative Sample report almost equal satisfaction with **Quality of Education** (M = 43.8) and **Compensation** or academic rigor (M = 43.2).

Representative Sample persisters appear least satisfied with the campus physical environment **(Working Conditions,** M = 42.6), and support and encouragement from faculty and staff **(Recognition,** M = 41.1). See Chart 1 for a representation of these means compared with the available national norms.

Representative Sample persisters' overall satisfaction compares favorably with the 1970 national norm group. MLS students report a **Total Satisfaction** index of 217.9 compared to 204.8(out of a possible 350) for the 1970 norm group.

CHART 1: A Comparison of CSSQ Means
MLS Representative and National Norm Groups



Question 2 — Is the Black Group more or less satisfied than the Representative Sample?

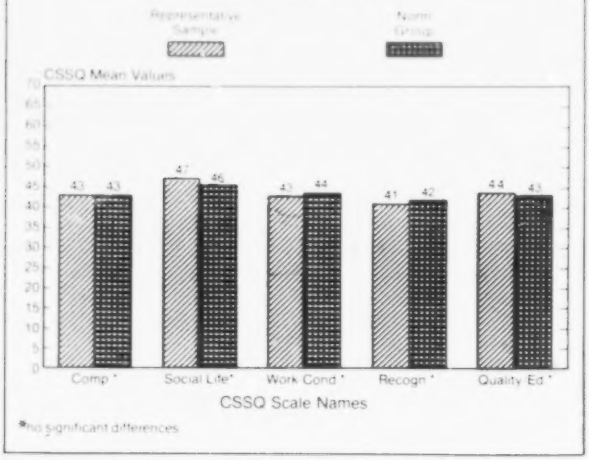
The data show that black students' pattern of satisfaction scores is virtually identical to the Representative Sample. **There are no statistically significant differences between the Black Group and Representative Sample on the five CSSQ satisfaction scales.**[3] See Chart 2 for a representation of CSSQ mean values for the Black Group and Representative Sample.

As previously reported for the Representative Sample, the Black Group is most satisfied with campus **Social Life.** Following in order of satisfaction for the Black Group are **Working Conditions, Compensation,** and **Quality of Education.** Black persisters are also least satisfied with **Recognition** or support and encouragement from faculty and staff. **The order of CSSQ means from most to least satisfied is *almost* the same for the Representative Sample and Black Group with the exception of Working Conditions and Quality of Education.** The Black Group is slightly more satisfied than the Representative Sample with the campus physical environment **(Working Conditions,** e.g., availability of quiet places to study, etc.) and factors reflecting **Quality of Education;** however, the differences are not statistically significant.

What about total satisfaction? The average **Total Satisfaction** index for the Black Group equals 217.3 virtually the same as the Representative Sample (M = 217.9). Both the Black Group and Representative Sample are more satisfied with their college experience than the average reported for a comparable group in 1970 (M = 204.8).

CHART 2: A Comparison of CSSQ Means*

Representative and Black



*No significant differences

Question 3 — How do men and women differ in satisfaction for both the Black Group and Representative Sample?

MLS data do *not* provide evidence for any significant differences between men and women in the Representative Sample. **Both males and females in this sample are most highly satisfied with Social Life (M** = 48.5 for females 45.8 for males) and least satisfied with Recognition or support and encouragement from faculty and staff (M = 41.6 for females; 40.4 for males).

In terms of a pattern of means comparing males and females, females were slightly more satisfied with **Social Life** (M = 48.5 for females; 45.8 for males), **Quality of Education** (M = 43.9 for females; 43.7 for males), and **Compensation** or academic rigor (M = 43.8 for females 43.7 for males), and **Recognition** or support and encouragement from faculty and staff (M = 41.6 for females; 40.4 for males). Given these subscale scores, it is not surprising that women were slightly more satisfied overall (M = 219.5 compared to M = 216.0 for males) although the difference is not statistically significant.

Unlike the Representative Sample, significant differences between males and females were found in the Black Group. Black males are significantly more satisfied than black females on four out of the five satisfaction scales **(Compensation, Social Life, Recognition,** and **Quality of Education).** Only differences in the scores for **Working Conditions,** which refers to the campus physical environment, do not reach statistical significance. **Not surprisingly, the Total Satisfaction index was also significantly higher for black males as well** (M = 232.8 for black males compared to 208.0 for black females). The number of students used in these analyses is somewhat small: 25 black men and 42 black women.

Question 4 — How is satisfaction related to student involvement in campus life?

There is increasing evidence that students who become actively involved in college are more likely both to remain enrolled and to be more satisfied with their collegiate experience (Astin, 1985). MLS persisters in the Representative Sample and Black Group were asked during their freshman and junior years about their level of involvement in various aspects of campus life. Items designed by the MLS Steering Committee to cover areas of involvement typical of college students are reproduced below. Students indicated the level of involvement in each area using a five point Likert scale, ranging from a low of "1" ("Not At All Involved"), "2" ("Slightly Involved"), "3" ("Somewhat Involved"), "4" ("Much Involved") to a high of "5" ("Very Much Involved"). The items on involvement rated by MLS participants were:

1. **Formal Academic Experiences** (through coursework, lectures, homework, study, independent study, research, etc.)
2. **Interpersonal Relationships with Students** (through getting to know a number of fellow students with different backgrounds, values, plans, etc.)
3. **Student Organization Experiences** (through joining and participating in campus activities, organizations, and events)
4. **Interpersonal Relationships with Faculty/Staff** (through getting to know and engaging in discussions outside of classes, with faculty, staff or advisors)
5. **Work Experiences** (through part or full-time paid or volunteer work experiences, with employer, fellow employees or from the work itself on or off campus)
6. **Overall Involvement**

In order to determine the relationship between involvement (as determined by the items presented above) and college student satisfaction (as determined by the CSSQ), persisters were classified as "highly involved" or "not much involved" based upon their responses to these involvement areas. The major question of interest was: **Do students who report high involvement in these areas differ significantly from less involved students in their satisfaction with various aspects of the college experience as measured by the CSSQ?**[4] Level of involvement in both the freshman and junior years was examined in relation to college satisfaction.

It is important to note that not only is it possible in these analyses to investigate the link between college satisfaction and involvement basd on data collected at the same point in time (in this case CSSQ scores and responses to items on student involvement, both assessed in the junior year) but it is also possible to "look backwards" from data collected in the junior year (i.e. CSSQ scores) to establish connections with data collected at an earlier time (in this case freshman responses to the involvement items). The major advantage of "looking backwards" through the data is the opportunity to link behaviors that have occurred at two separate times. Establishing such connections over time is only possible because MLS is a *longitudinal* study and as such data have been collected from the *same* students over the five years of the project.

FRESHMAN YEAR INVOLVEMENT: REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE

Considering the Representative Sample first, students who as freshmen reported high involvement with other students (e.g., indicated high involvement on the item: **Interpersonal Relationships with Students)** were significantly more satisfied with virtually *all* aspects of the college experience in their junior year (as measured by the CSSQ). Getting to know other students with a variety of backgrounds, values and plans as a freshman is significantly related to satisfaction with **Compensation** (M = 44.9 for highly involved students compared to an average of 42.3 for less involved students), **Social Life** (M = 50.0 compared to 43.6), **Recognition** (M = 42.7 compared to 39.1), **Quality of Education** (M = 45.0 compared to 42.1), and the **Total**

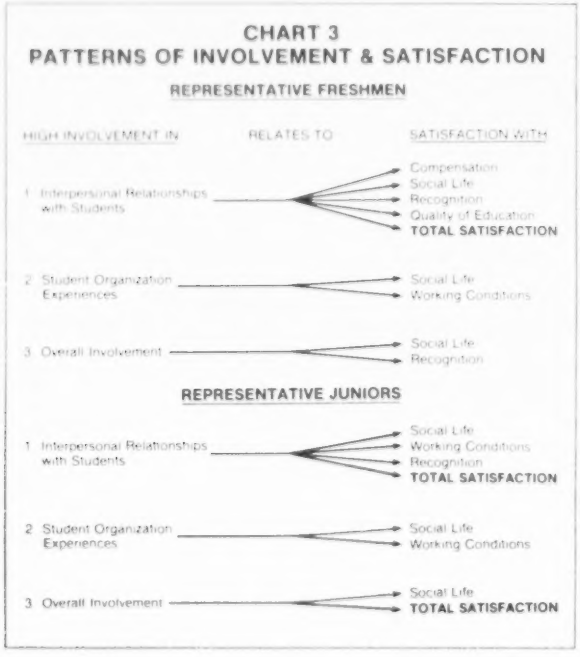
Satisfaction index of the CSSQ (M = 224.6 for highly involved students compared to 208.7 for less involved). **In other words, freshmen who express high involvement with their fellow students report high degrees of satisfaction with college overall.**

What other types of freshman year involvement are significantly related to later satisfaction? High freshman involvement in **Student Organization Experiences** including joining and participating in campus activities and events is related to later satisfaction both with campus social life (**Social Life** scale of the CSSQ, M = 51.7 for the highly involved students compared to 46.0 for the less involved) and with the physical environment of the campus (**Working Conditions;** M = 44.8 compared to 41.9). Finally, freshmen who reported high **Overall Involvement** are more satisfied with campus social life (**Social Life,** M = 51.6 versus 46.0 for the less involved), and with support and encouragement **(Recognition)** from faculty and staff (M = 43.6 compared to 40.5). High freshman involvement (e.g. **Overall Involvement**) just missed statistical significance with the CSSQ **Total Satisfaction index measured in the junior year[5]. A significant relationship between these two variables would suggest that strong involvement in the freshman year sets the stage for later satisfaction with college.**

JUNIOR YEAR INVOLVEMENT: REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE

Is the pattern of satisfaction and involvement during the junior year similar to the freshman data? Representative Sample persisters who as juniors report high involvement in the area of **Interpersonal Relationships with Students** are significantly more *satisfied* with campus **Social Life** (M = 49.1 compared to 44.8 for uninvolved), **Working Conditions** (or attributes of the campus physical environment, M = 43.7 versus 41.2), and faculty and staff support and encouragement (**Recognition;** M = 42.3 compared to 39.6) than juniors who report low involvement. In addition, the average of the **Total Satisfaction** index for the highly involved group is 223.7, significantly different from the "not much involved" group's average of 210.4. **Thus high involvement with fellow students seems to cast a positive effect over the entire college experience as evidenced by the significantly higher CSSQ Total Satisfaction index.**

CHART 3
PATTERNS OF INVOLVEMENT & SATISFACTION



Again similar to freshmen, juniors who are highly involved in **Student Organization Experiences** are also more significantly satisfied with campus **Social Life** (M = 50.8 versus 45.9) and campus physical environment (**Working Conditions;** M = 45.4 versus 41.6). Furthermore, juniors who rate themselves high on **Overall Involvement** are also significantly more satisfied with campus **Social Life** (M = 50.3 compared to 45.7). Finally, the trend between high **Overall Involvement** in the freshman year and **Total Satisfaction** scores becomes statistically significant in the junior year. In other words, **juniors who report high "Overall Involvement" are significantly more satisfied with college as a whole.** Their CSSQ total mean index is 225.89 compared to 214.14 for those juniors reporting low involvement. See Chart 3 for a visual representation of the relationship between satisfaction and involvement for freshmen and juniors in the Representative Sample.

FRESHMAN YEAR INVOLVEMENT: BLACK GROUP

Turning to the Black Group, a different picture emerges. **The strong relationship between involvement in the freshman year and numerous types of student satisfaction as determined by the CSSQ is not seen in the Black Group.** Indeed only **one** scale of the CSSQ, **Social Life** is related to high **Overall Involvement** in the freshman year at a statistically significant level. In other words, students in the Black Group who report high **Overall Involvement** are significantly different from those who report low involvement on satisfaction with **Social Life** in the freshman year (M = 50.6 versus 44.6).

JUNIOR YEAR INVOLVEMENT: BLACK GROUP

In the junior year, involvement in two of the involvement areas described earlier was significantly related to satisfaction as measured by the CSSQ for black persisters. First, those who report high involvement in **Formal Academic Experiences** are significantly more satisfied with the **Quality of Education** scale of the CSSQ (M = 44.6 for highly involved black juniors compared to 40.7 for less involved students). The **Quality of Education** scale of the CSSQ contains items such as "The chance for a student to develop to the best of his abilities" and "The chance to prepare well for your vocation."

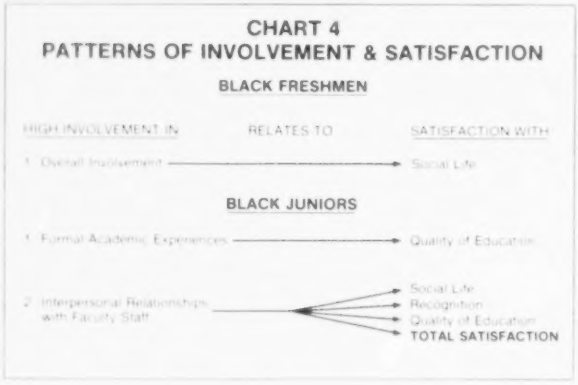
Second, black juniors who report high involvement in the area of **Interpersonal Relationships with Faculty/Staff** are significantly more satisfied on the following scales of the CSSQ: **Social Life, Recognition** and **Quality of Education.** In other words, black juniors who indicate low involvement with faculty/staff are significantly less satisfied with these aspects of college life. The mean scores of the highly involved and less involved groups compare as follows.

First, juniors who rate highly their involvement in the area of **Interpersonal Relationships with Faculty Staff** are more satisfied on the **Social Life** scale of the CSSQ; highly involved black juniors average 53.8 as compared to less involved students' mean of 45.0 on this scale. Second, black juniors who rate highly their involvement with faculty/ staff are also significantly more satisfied with **Recognition:** highly involved black juniors average 48.2 compared to 41.4 for less highly involved blacks. Finally, black juniors who report high involvement with faculty and staff are significantly more satisfied with **Quality of Education:** they report an average of 50.8 compared to 42.5 for less involved black students.

High involvement with faculty and staff is also significantly related to high satisfaction with college as a whole for black

juniors. Blacks who report high involvement in the area of **Interpersonal Relationships with Faculty/Staff** are also significantly more satisfied with college overall as measured by the **CSSQ Total Satisfaction** index (M = 246.8 for highly involved students compared to 214.9 for less involved students). See Chart 4 for a visual representation of the relationship between satisfaction and involvement for freshmen and juniors in the Black Group.

CHART 4
PATTERNS OF INVOLVEMENT & SATISFACTION



Question 5: How is satisfaction related to place of residence (i.e. on versus off campus)?

Astin (1985) in his book **Achieving Educational Excellence** notes that perhaps the most important and pervasive factor affecting a student's degree of involvement in aspects of college life is the student's place of residence. Living on campus appears to provide more opportunity to get involved in virtually all aspects of college life.

Given Astin's premise, the connection between residence and college satisfaction at UMCP has been analyzed. **Are students living on campus more satisfied than commuters with college life? Does the answer to this question differ for the Black Group and for the Representative Sample and for men and women?**

Differences in satisfaction were analyzed among students who lived in college residence halls, with parents or in "other" types of housing (basically off campus apartments and greek houses) in the freshman and junior years. These analyses were performed in much the same manner as those concerning involvement and satisfaction described previously. The connection between satisfaction (measured by the CSSQ) and place of residence involved a "looking backwards" approach, grouping freshmen by their place of residence and then examining their satisfaction scores in the junior year for differences. The connection between residence and satisfaction in the junior year does *not* require this link across time as both the CSSQ data and place of residence are coterminous. Only those CSSQ scales revealing a *significant difference* in satisfaction between students living on campus and those living off campus are reported in the section below.

REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE: RESIDENCE AND SATISFACTION

In the Representative Sample, significant differences were found only in students' satisfaction with Social Life (as measured by the CSSQ in the junior year) based on place of residence in the **freshman year and junior year.** Freshmen living in campus residence halls were significantly more satisfied with **Social Life** than freshmen living off campus with parents (M = 50.8 versus 45.0. The number of *freshmen* living in "other" off campus housing arrangements (e.g. apartments or greek houses) was too small to include in these analyses. There were no significant differences in satisfaction between students living with parents and campus residents on the remaining satisfaction scales **(Compensation, Working Conditions, Recognition, Quality of Education** and **Total Satisfaction)** in **either** the freshman or junior year.

In terms of the pattern of these scales from highest satisfaction to lowest, both campus resident students and those living with parents rated satisfaction with **Social Life** highest in both freshman and junior years; **Recognition** or support and encouragement from faculty and staff was rated lowest in satisfaction by both students living on campus or at home during the freshman and junior years.

While the **Social Life** scale of the CSSQ was rated the highest source of satisfaction by both freshmen and juniors, the relationship between place of residence and satisfaction has changed from the freshman to the junior year. In the junior year, students reporting *highest* satisfaction with **Social Life** are those living *off-campus* in apartments or greek houses (M = 44.2) as opposed to those living in campus residence halls (M = 42.2) or with parents (M = 41.4). Thus freshmen express a preference for living *on campus* in terms of satisfaction with their **Social Life** ; juniors however are significantly more satisfied with **Social Life** if they live *off* campus in apartments or similar housing.

There were no significant differences in satisfaction as measured by the CSSQ between men and women in the Representative Sample by place of residence in either the freshman or junior year.

BLACK GROUP: RESIDENCE AND SATISFACTION

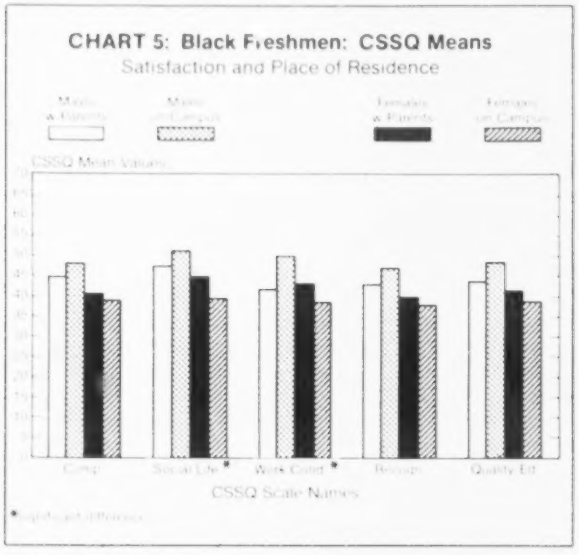
Doing the same analyses for the Black Group produced much different results. As noted above in the Representative Sample analyses, there were no significant differences by *sex* in either the freshman or junior year. Instead, a significant positive relationship was identified between place of residence (e.g. living in college residence halls for freshmen and in off-campus apartments/houses for juniors) and satisfaction with college **Social Life** for all sub-groups (a statistical **main** effect).

In contrast, for the Black Group, the results of residence and satisfaction patterns cannot be understood without taking into account the sex of the students. Futhermore in the freshman year, there is a statistical **interaction** between sex and place of residence on several scales of the CSSQ. This means that when considering each CSSQ satisfaction scale, one sex indicates a significant preference for one living situation (e.g. in a residence hall or at home with parents) while the other sex expresses the opposite preference.

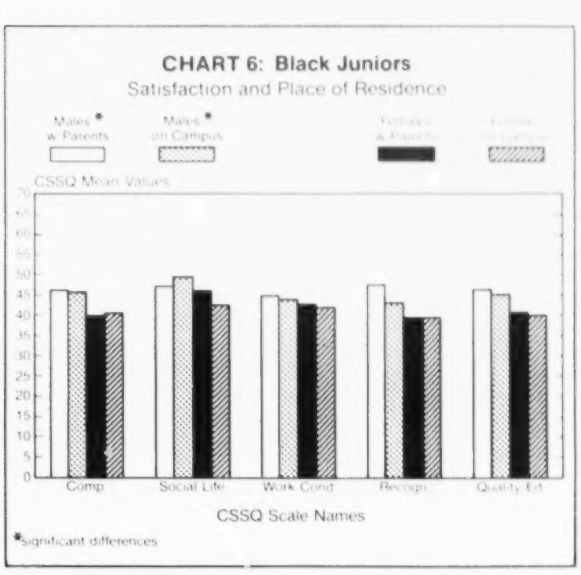
In the freshman year, both statistical **interaction** and **main effects** can be illustrated. **Black males were significantly more satisfied than black females with all aspects of college as measured by the CSSQ (in the junior year) regardless of place of residence** (a significant statistical **main** effect). However, for three of the CSSQ scales, a significant interaction of sex and place of residence occurred indicating a different pattern of satisfaction by residence for black males and females.

On the CSSQ scales of **Social Life, Working Conditions** (or campus environment) and the **Total Satisfaction index,** black women *living at home* were significantly more satisfied than black women living in residence halls. On these same scales, black men *living in residence halls* gave higher ratings than men living at home. In other words, for black

freshman men, living in residence halls is associated with significantly greater satisfaction with several aspects of college life measured during the junior year (e.g. **Social Life, Working Conditions, or physical conditions of the college environment, and Total Satisfaction);** while freshmen black women living at home express higher satisfaction on these variables. See Chart 5 for a representation of these means.



In the junior year, black men were again significantly more satisfied than black women on all five of the CSSQ scales as well as the **Total Satisfaction** index, **regardless of place of residence** (significant **main** effect). Unlike the freshman year, there were no significant **interaction** effects between sex and place of residence. Satisfaction ratings for black junior women living at home and in residence halls were virtually identical. Only on the **Social Life** scale did women living at home indicate a somewhat, but not significant, higher satisfaction mean. Chart 6 outlines the mean CSSQ scores for black males and females in the junior year allowing the reader to see the pattern of significance.



IV: SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Before turning to the implications of these findings, each major question is outlined and the results of the data analyses are summarized.

Summary: Question 1 — What aspects of campus are students included within the Representative Sample most and least satisfied with and how do their satisfaction scores compare to students nationwide?

Persisters in the Representative Sample give high ratings to campus **Social Life** with its opportunities to meet new people, make friends and generally enjoy the extracurricular side of campus life. This scale includes items such as "The things you can do to have fun here" and "The opportunity to make close friends here." **Furthermore, persisters in the Representative Sample rated satisfaction with faculty and staff support and encouragement (Recognition) lowest as a source of college satisfaction.** This scale included items such as "The friendliness of most faculty members" and "The chance to get help in deciding what your major should be."

MLS participants in the Representative Sample are more satisfied than the students who provided data for the 1970 CSSQ national norms.

Summary: Question 2 — Are Black Group subjects more or less satisfied than the Representative Sample?

There were no significant differences between the Black Group and the Representative Sample on any of the individual CSSQ scales or the **Total Satisfaction** index as measured in the junior year. Like the Representative Sample, blacks rank satisfaction with **Social Life** first, and rate **Recognition** or support and encouragement from faculty and staff last.

Summary: Question 3 — How do men and women differ in satisfaction for both the Black Group and Representative Sample?

No significant differences were found between men and women in the Representative Sample. Both men and women report most satisfaction with **Social Life** and least satisfaction with **Recognition** from faculty and staff. In contrast, **men in the Black Group were significantly more satisfied than women in the Black Group on practically all aspects measured by the CSSQ.** (Only the scale dealing with campus physical environment, **Working Conditions,** failed to replicate this pattern of significant difference.)

Summary: Question 4 — How is satisfaction related to student involvement in campus life?

For third year persisters in the Representative Sample high involvement with other students in a social context (Interpersonal Relationships with Students) and with student organizations (Student Organization Experiences) in both the *freshman year* and in the *junior year* was associated with greater satisfaction with various aspects of the college experience. In addition, highly involved juniors were significantly more satisfied than less involved juniors with college as a whole as measured by the **Total Satisfaction** index.

For third year persisters in the Black Group the relationship between involvement and college satisfaction is somewhat different. High **Total Involvement** in the freshman year is positively associated with only one scale of the CSSQ: **Social Life.** For black juniors, a statistically significant relationship was found between high involvement with faculty and staff **(Interpersonal Relationships with**

Faculty/Staff) and the CSSQ scales of **Social Life, Recognition,** and **Quality of Education. High involvement with Faculty/Staff was significantly associated with high Total Satisfaction scores in the junior year.**

Summary: Question 5 — How is satisfaction related to place of residence (i.e. on versus off campus)?

Freshmen in the Representative Sample who lived in University residence halls were significantly more satisfied with campus Social Life (as measured by the CSSQ in their junior year). Living in a residence hall was not significantly associated with satisfaction as measured by any of the other CSSQ scores. **As juniors, living off campus in apartments or greek houses was associated with greater satisfaction with Social Life.**

The relationship between satisfaction and place of residence was significantly affected by the student's sex for the Black Group. As freshman, black men were much more satisfied with the aspects of college measured by the CSSQ than black women, **no matter whether the men lived on or off campus.** However, there were significant differences by residence for black freshman women. ***Black freshman women living at home*** **indicated higher satisfaction scores compared to black freshman women living on campus** on the CSSQ scales of **Social Life, Working Conditions and Total Satisfaction.**

In the junior year, black men again were more satisfied than black women on all scales of the CSSQ **regardless of place of residence.** However, for black junior women, satisfaction ratings by residence (either living at home or in residence halls) were practically the same. For black junior women, living at home as no longer associated with higher college satisfaction as was the case in the freshman year.

V: IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR INCREASING STUDENT SATISFACTION AT UMCP

What do these findings imply for students attending UMCP? Do these results suggest ways of increasing student satisfaction with college? In this section, the study's major results will be interpreted and possible areas for impact and change identified.

QUESTION 1

The first question of interest concerned the degree of satisfaction with college (as measured by the CSSQ) expressed by the Representative Sample compared with available national norms. While it was perhaps pleasing to note that UMCP students in the Representative Sample have higher means on all CSSQ satisfaction scales compared to the 1970 norm group, this comparison may in fact be a weak one. First, over 16 years have passed since the reported CSSQ norms were established. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, it was both more fashionable and probably a valid reflection of their attitudes for students to express disenchantment with college. The common wisdom supports the notion that college students' of the 1980's are in fact more content both with themselves and with society at large. **Hence comparisons of the MLS group with the 1970's are perhaps mirroring a general zeitgeist change rather than any real improvement with student satisfaction.**

Second, the comparison with the norms must be viewed with caution because it is not clear at what point in the students' college experience the data were collected on which these norms were based. The MLS Representative Sample completed the CSSQ during their junior year of college; presumably many who were very dissatisfied with college were no longer enrolled and hence the CSSQ mean is probably positively biased. Given these limitations, the conclusion that MLS students in the Representative Sample are much more satisfied than the CSSQ national norm group must be made with caution.

QUESTION 2

The second major question of interest in this report concerned differences in satisfaction between MLS participants in the Representative Sample and the Black Group. Contrary to the generally held expectation that minority students enrolled on a predominantly white campus would report more dissatisfaction with their college experience, **no significant differences were found between the Black Group and the Representative Sample.** Black MLS students expressed a remarkably similar degree of satisfaction with campus life, citing the same highs **(Social Life)** and lows **(Recognition).** However it is important to keep in mind that the students providing the data are **juniors;** again as noted above, students in either the black or representative groups who were very dissatisfied with campus life have likely left the institution by their junior year. **Thus it may not be surprising that students who persist, regardless of race, are satisfied and even demonstrate the same pattern of likes and dislikes.**

One way of examining this contention is to consider the percentage of students in the Representative Sample and Black Group who drop out, or transfer to another college and hence are not available to take the CSSQ in their junior year. Comparing the percentages of students in the Representative Sample and Black Group who *dropped out* of UMCP and did not begin college again elsewhere results in the following: 13% of students in the Representative Sample dropped out of UMCP in the period between Fall, 1980 and Fall, 1984. Twenty-three percent of students in the Black Group dropped out of UMCP during the same time period. These figures are based on self report and do not include students with missing data.

Also similar are the percentages of MLS participants who *transfer* from UMCP to another college or university. Considering transfers over the same four year time period in each group results in the following: 21% of MLS participants from the Representative Sample transferred from UMCP, 22% of students in the Black Group also transferred. These figures are again based on self report and do not include students with missing data. **Thus the finding that no significant differences exist in satisfaction between the Black Group and Representative Sample can not be accounted for simply by a disproportionate dropping out or transferring from UMCP.**

However, one other factor must be taken into account before this can be accepted with total confidence. Over the course of MLS data collection, records have been kept on the percentages of students in both groups who were **not contacted** for the yearly assessment because they were either unwilling to continue to participate or were unable to be located. Here a potentially significant difference may exist between the Representative Sample and the Black Group.

In the third year of testing when the CSSQ was given, 31% of the Black Group fell into this uncontacted category. Only 19% of students in the Representative Sample were uncontacted. Thus a larger percentage of blacks were unaccounted for and consequently if their status were known (e.g. transfer or non-student) the figures indicating the relative dropout/transfer rates of students in the Black Group and Representative Sample may be somewhat altered. **The conclusion that no significant differences in satisfaction exist between the Black Group and Representative Sample in year three of MLS must be tempered by the knowledge that less information is available on a significant number of blacks in terms of their academic status.**

QUESTION 3

The third major question examined in this report, "How do men and women differ in satisfaction for both the Black Group and Representative Sample?", emphasizes the importance of sex differences in fully understanding college student satisfaction. As the findings in this report indicated, the race of men and women also cannot be ignored.

Indeed, one of the more notable findings is the apparent dissatisfaction of black University women with their college experience. Unlike students in the Representative Sample, men and women in the Black Group reported significant differences in satisfaction with the UMCP experience. **Black men report greater satisfaction overall than black women.** What factors are affecting black women's attitudes about UMCP? Is their dissatisfaction with higher education in general or specific to UMCP?

One way of looking at these questions is to take the approach utilized above comparing the relative rates of dropping out of higher education or transferring to other colleges, **this time broken down by sex.** The percentage of MLS black men and women participants who began at UMCP but transferred to another college or university and continued their enrollment is as follows: 24% for black females; 10% for black males. Students can also demonstrate their dissatisfaction with college by leaving higher education altogether. The percent of MLS black females who dropped out at some point from UMCP and did not re-enroll in any other college or university is 18%; this figure compares to 27% for males. **Thus it appears that black women are not turned off by higher education in general since they leave UMCP and go elsewhere, whereas black men who leave UMCP tend to leave the educational realm entirely.**

Jacqueline Fleming (1985) has suggested that much of blacks' dissatisfaction on predominantly white campuses is due to isolation and lack of significant and meaningful social lives. The present report reinforces this for black women: they report the lowest degree of satisfaction on the CSSQ **Social Life** scale. Considering some of the items included in the CSSQ **Social Life** scale suggests that black women do not find UMCP a place where "The choice of dates you have here" or "The chances to go out and have a good time" are satisfactory.

Fleming also suggests that in order to find a more supportive social environment, many black women may need to transfer to predominantly black institutions. A future MLS report will consider in depth the transfer student phenomenon and explore further the connection between black women's dissatisfaction with UMCP, and the type of college to which they transfer.

The relationship between college student satisfaction and involvement in various aspects of campus life and place of residence were the final two areas addressed in this report. The results of residence and satisfaction are also influenced by a strong sex effect for the Black Group. **Black freshman women who live *at home* were significantly more satisfied overall than black freshman women who lived on campus and specifically more satisfied with their social life.** What obstacles are removed for black women by living at home that interfere with college satisfaction? Does living at home provide more support, less financial strain or more opportunity to meet men? MLS collected information in the students' freshman year which may be relevant in evaluating these possible explanations.

Over 62% of black freshman women reported a personal income of under $1000 per year, compared to 52% of black freshman men. In terms of specific sources of financial support, more black freshman women than men relied on themselves as significant sources of support (13% of black freshmen women reported this versus 10% of the black freshman men) and were slightly more likely to report significant use of scholarships (47% of black freshman women; 42% for black freshman men). Thus to some degree, black freshman women living at home may express higher satisfaction than black freshman women living on campus because of less concern over finances.

MLS data collected in the freshman year also suggest that family is an important source of support for black students. Fully 36% of black students' families were perceived as being somewhat or strongly encouraging of their being a student at UMCP. Black freshman women also indicated that their family group was a stronger source of affiliation than did black freshman men (13% of women versus 11% of men). **These data, plus the low CSSQ Social Life ratings offer some support for the notion that living at home does provide black women with more support—emotionally and financially.**

In addition, both MLS data and figures from the UMCP Office of Institutional Studies support the contention that black women outnumber black men on this campus. In the Fall of 1980 (the first year of MLS data collection) 65% of black freshmen were women; only 35% were men. Black participants in MLS also demonstrate a significant difference in the number of black males and females. In year 3, 29% of MLS participants were black women compared to 15% black men. Consequently black women's dissatisfaction with social life may indeed be influenced by the relatively low number of black men in the UMCP environment.

Implications, **if UMCP desires to keep more black women enrolled,** may include increasing financial assistance and attempting to find more ways of building the support systems of these women. Simply living in campus residence halls does not appear to meet the needs of black women. Also, increasing the number of black men who attend UMCP would seem not only to help fulfill the University's goals of a multi-ethnic campus, but may in turn positively affect the satisfaction and ultimate retention of black women.

QUESTION 4

Turning to the connection between place of residence and satisfaction for the Representative Sample suggests a picture more consistent with accepted theories of college student development as well as campus folklore. First, recall that living on campus was associated with significantly higher satisfaction with campus social life in the *freshman* year. However, living off campus in apartments or greek houses was associated with higher satisfaction with social life in the students' *junior year*. Chickering (1969) would suggest that these findings are consistent with the growth of independence or autonomy as well as students' increased ability to manage emotions and interpersonal relationships. **Consequently, encouraging freshmen to live on campus and upperclassmen to move to apartments or more independent living situations seems appropriate according to Chickering's theory.** However, it is interesting to speculate about the lack of connection between living situation, especially on campus, and the **other** scales of the CSSQ.

While it is important to have students content with their social lives (e.g., especially in light of the discussion above on black women's dissatisfaction with their social networks and the impact on retention), one mission often acknowledged by residence hall personnel is the enhancement of students' academic as well as social development. On the CSSQ, the scales of **Recognition** and **Quality of Education** come closest to representing the academic side of the student experience.

Some examples of items from the CSSQ **Recognition** scale include "The interest that advisors take in the progress of their students," "The chances of getting acquainted with the teachers in your major area," or "Teachers' concern for students' needs and interests." Items from the **Quality of Education** scale include "Your opportunity here to determine your own pattern of intellectual development," and "The chance to explore important ideas," and "The preparation students are getting for their future careers." While living in a campus residence hall may not be linked to all academic behaviors, living on campus should provide the opportunity to engage more easily in interactions supportive of a student's academic goals. New ways of exploiting the campus resident student's availability to academically related activities could be explored in addition to the development of more academically centered programming situated within the residence hall environment. Increasing the role of residence halls in the academic success and satisfaction of students has payoffs for both the student and the University.

QUESTION 5

The final question explored in this report concerned the connection between satisfaction and involvement in campus life. As was discussed above, students in the Representative Sample who as juniors reported high overall involvement were significantly more satisfied with their college experience than juniors reporting low overall involvement. Similar results were noted with freshmen in the Representative Sample although the association was not statistically significant. **Thus it appears that facilitation of student involvement will increase the probability of high student satisfaction.**

By and large, students in both the representative and black groups seem to do quite well becoming involved in campus social life. They rate highest their satisfaction with **Social Life** compared to other aspects of college measured by the CSSQ. A more problematic area is student satisfaction with faculty and staff support and encouragement **(Recognition). It is interesting to note that not only are students least satisfied with their relationship with faculty and staff, very few report active involvement with these individuals.**

Only about 4% of freshmen in the Representative Sample indicated high involvement with faculty. By the junior year, this percentage has risen to 10%. Students in the Black Group demonstrate a slightly higher percentage of high involvement with faculty and staff in the freshman year (7%) but this rate stays stable through their junior year and does not show the increase seen in the Representative Sample. Thus, given the fact that approximately 90% of students report little or no significant interaction with faculty and staff, their dissatisfaction is not surprising. Students appear to be missing the opportunity to interact with individuals who should be important contributors to their education.

The importance of a positive faculty/staff and student relationship is seen in the Black Group: even though only a small number report high involvement with the faculty and staff in their junior year, they are **significantly more satisfied!** In fact, despite the small number (see percentage above), statistical significance was achieved due to the *very* large differences in satisfaction scores between highly involved and less involved black juniors.

Fleming's recent research is supportive of the importance to black students of positive interactions with faculty and staff. **She maintains that for blacks feeling some sense of progress and success in their academic pursuits is vital to their satisfaction with the college experience.** Indeed MLS data on the Black Group suggest that high involvement with formal academic experiences is associated with higher satisfaction **overall** and with areas not rated highly in general by students (e.g. **Quality of Education** and **Recognition).**

The connection between satisfaction and involvement with faculty and staff is also consistent with Astin's work (1985) in which he notes "Frequent interaction with faculty members is more strongly related to satisfaction with college than any other type of involvement, or indeed, any other student or institutional characteristic" (p. 149). In line with the data presented in this report and Fleming's research on blacks, Astin suggests that finding ways to encourage greater student involvement with faculty and staff improves students' satisfaction with virtually all aspects of their college experience, including friendships with other students, coursework, the intellectual environment and the administration.

The results of this study further suggest a high payoff for student involvement in student organizations and other organized campus activities. Using the data reported here, continuing to find ways of encouraging student participation may affect satisfaction with social life and satisfaction with the campus physical environment as well. The connection between involvement in student activities and satisfaction with the physical environment has intriguing implications in light of the generally low satisfaction ratings obtained by that scale of the CSSQ. Perhaps involvement in campus organizations facilitates a deeper appreciation of the resources available on campus which are not as apparent to an uninvolved student. For example, items on the CSSQ scale include "The availability of good places to study," and "The places provided for students to relax between classes."

In conclusion, this report has examined college student satisfaction in light of several important factors: students' race, sex, place of residence and involvement in various aspects of college life. While on one hand, race proved to be a less distinguishing variable than sex in some of these analyses, it is important to keep in mind that the data used in this report were collected from **persisters** in the third year of MLS. Thus there is a high probability that very dissatisfied students from **either** the Black Group or Representative Sample were no longer enrolled at UMCP and hence may have minimized differences in satisfaction between the two groups. The high drop out and transfer rate of students (male and female) in the Black Group does not allow for complacency in understanding the roots of black student dissatisfaction with UMCP.

The relationship between student satisfaction and place of residence supported in some ways campus folklore and developmental theory—at least for the Representative Sample. **The connection with living on campus and social life is strong;** however the potential of residence halls to influence student satisfaction with other important aspects of the students' college experience was not fully realized according to the data reported here.

Further, this report strongly supports the importance of student involvement as a condition for satisfaction with college. **Not too surprisingly, the results also indicate that students' patterns of satisfaction differ depending upon the areas in which they become involved.** Students who become involved in student organizations are satisfied with different aspects of college than students who become involved with faculty and coursework. However, despite these differences in patterns of involvement and satisfaction, one of the most significant findings of this report is the connection, supported by the literature (e.g. Astin, and Fleming) between high involvement with faculty and staff and increased satisfaction with virtually **all aspects** of college life. **Thus encouraging and supporting faculty and staff interaction (especially of the informal, out of class sort) may be a powerful means of influencing students' college experience for the better.**

END NOTES

1. If you have not already received a copy of the introductory Maryland Longitudinal Study report which fully describes the study, instruments used, populations studied, etc., write: Maryland Longitudinal Study, The University of Maryland, 2108 North Administration Building, College Park, MD 20742.

2. Analysis of variance was used to determine the significance of the comparisons described in this report. For example, students were divided into high/low involvement groups based on their responses to the Likert items discussed and differences in college satisfaction (as measured by the CSSQ) were investigated. An .05 level of significance was used in these analyses.

3. Since the CSSQ Manual (1983) reports no national norms for blacks, it was not possible to provide a comparison with national norms for blacks as was done for the Representative Sample in the previous question.

4. While level of involvement in these six areas above was assessed, only statistically significant relationships between these areas of involvement and the CSSQ satisfaction scales will be discussed in this report.

5. Freshman involvement may also have positive effects on satisfaction in the freshman year. However, MLS data do not permit this analysis since the CSSQ was only administered in Year 3.

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The Maryland Longitudinal Study (MLS) is a research undertaking of the Division of Student Affairs at The University of Maryland College Park. A significant number of Student Affairs staff have been involved in the study since its inception. A Steering Committee appointed by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs has been responsible for the methodology, data collection, and management of this project. These individuals are listed in Appendix A of the MLS report entitled "The Maryland Longitudinal Study — A Descriptive Overview: The Study's Purpose, Goals, Features, Participants, and Design."